



Severe Weather Terms — What They Mean



- Advisory — A message released by the hurricane center, usually at 6-hour intervals, updating information on the storm or hurricane, including watches and warnings whenever they are in effect. A special advisory is given any time there is a significant change in weather conditions or a change in warnings previously released. An intermediate advisory updates information in advisories at 2- to 3-hour intervals, whenever a watch or warning is in effect.
- Gale warning — Storm with non-cyclonic winds of 30 to 54 MPH expected.
- Hurricane — A tropical storm with winds of 74 MPH or more.
- Hurricane season — June 1 through November 30 is officially designated as hurricane season.
- Hurricane warning — A hurricane is expected to strike your area within 24 hours with sustained winds of 74 MPH or more accompanied by heavy rain and high waves.
- Hurricane watch — The alert given when a hurricane poses a threat to a certain coastal area within 36 hours.
- Small craft warnings — When a hurricane or tropical storm threatens a coastal area, small craft are advised to remain in port and not to venture into the open sea.
- Storm surge — A rise in tides caused by a hurricane as it moves over or near the coastline. It can be much higher than the normal tidal rise, with breaking waves on top.
- Storm warning — Storm with non-cyclonic winds of 55 to 73 MPH expected.

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- Tornado watch — Tornados and severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.
- Tornado warning — Tornado detected in your area: TAKE SHELTER.
- Tropical depression — An area of low pressure, rotary circulation of clouds and winds to 38 MPH.
- Tropical disturbance — A moving area of thunderstorms in the tropics.
- Tropical storm — Counterclockwise circulation of clouds and winds, 39 MPH to 73 MPH. The storm is assigned a name.